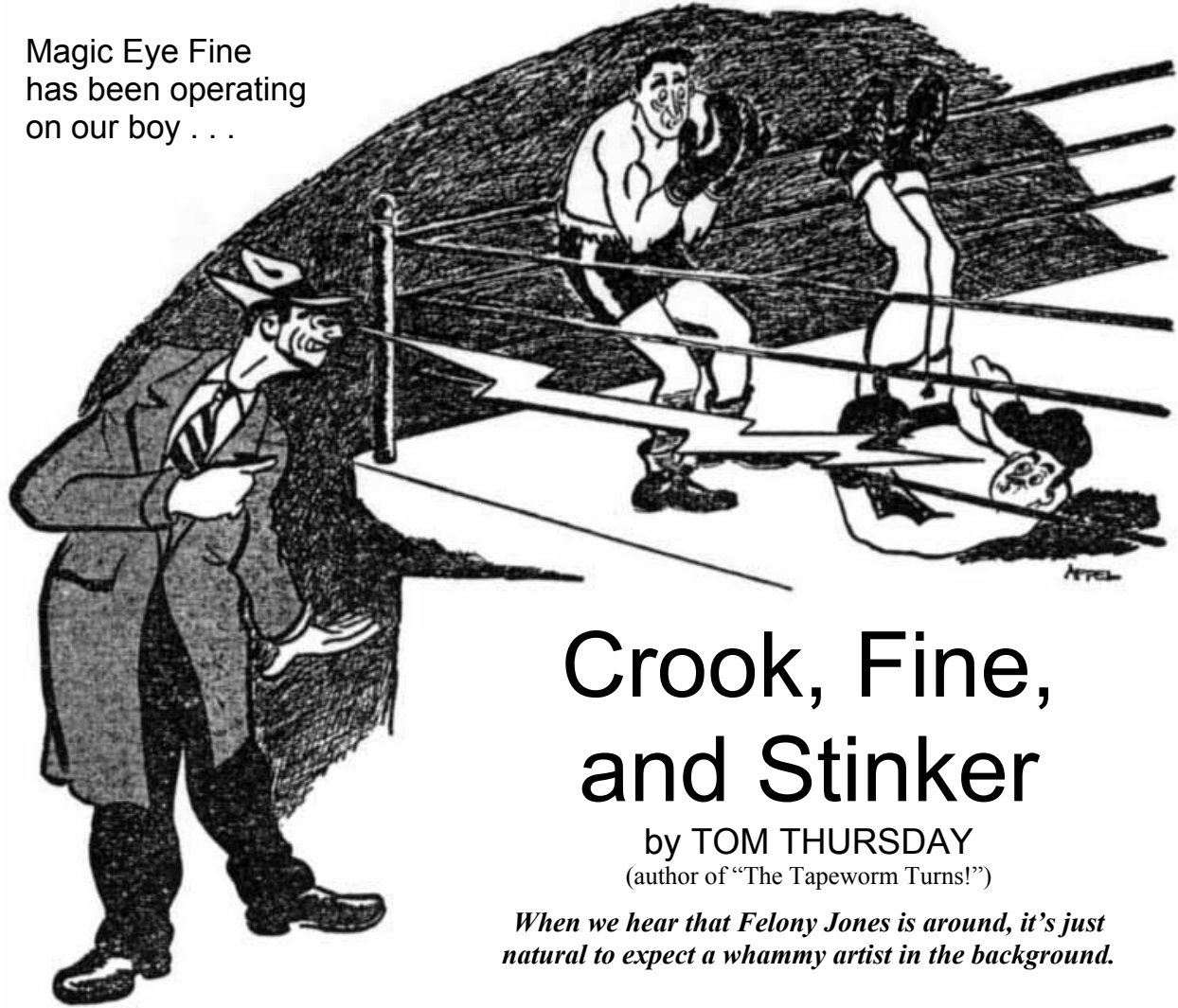


Magic Eye Fine  
has been operating  
on our boy . . .



## Crook, Fine, and Stinker

by TOM THURSDAY  
(author of "The Tapeworm Turns!")

*When we hear that Felony Jones is around, it's just  
natural to expect a whammy artist in the background.*

I CAN TELL by the way the Boss's puss is puffing in and out that he does care for the rude manner in which Galloping McBumm is hammering his own personal fisticuffer, Socker Sosin. It is the third round and Sosin has been delighted to rest on the canvas at least six times or each time McBumm has tapped him on the beakus. This is indeed very disappointing because the Boss has come all the way to Miami to see his boy perform in the Orange Bowl, and he is positive Sosin should be the welter champ, regardless what happens.

Suddenly the Boss turns to me and states, like this, "I see from here that Felony Jones, the crook, has hired Magic Eye Fine to put the whammy on the Socker. All of which is undoubtedly why my champ cannot make any headway with his natural ability."

The Boss is so irked and perturbed that he swallows his fresh-lit cigar and we have to sock him on the back before he will consider coughing it up. So me and the other boys get the Boss outside the Orange Bowl and inform him that we are very sorry that he is not feeling so well and likewise Socker Sosin.

"Look," says the Boss, "this here funny business has went far enough and I do not desire anymore shenagans from either Felony Jones or Magic Eye Fine. Therefore steps will be taken at once to see that matters are changed so that both them rats will keep out of my hair."

I am about to remind the Boss that he has forgot to put on his wig but he has always been very quick with a gun and I do not care to injure his feelings. "Well," I say, "what you have remarked is very quite true and them bums should be dealt with in a

manner that is of interest to any smart embalmer. However," I add, "what is your desire in the matter?"

"You will find out where this Magic Eye Fine lives, which is no doubt in some alley ashcan, and you will bring him before me as soon as possible, if not ahead of time. I will then make a deal with Magic Eye and show him that his present connections is full of errors and also holes. Anyone," says the Boss, "who associates with such small-tripe tramps as Felony Jones is very weak in the head where the brains are supposed to be horsing around."

The Boss takes out a buck cigar and lights it with a dollar bill which same he claims is practically of no value due to the inflation that is now touring the country. The Boss is a very rich man because he made his money honestly in the Bolita racket which is nothing but selling numbers to folks who would like to strike it rich with no work whatsoever. The fact that they have only one chance in 999 of copping the right number when it falls is something that don't annoy them in the least because they have perhaps never went to school and studied arithmetic.

"Whatever you say, Boss," I remark, "is okay by me and the boys. If you desire to hold a little chitchat with Magic Eye Fine, I will see that he has the honor of your company. "But," I observe to the Boss, "if he does not care to visit you while still breathing what is your orders in such a unfortunate case in respect to sudden rigors of mortis?"

"You will please not rough him up beyond repairs," says the Boss, "because I want the full use of his Magic Eye, which same I have heard so much about, and perhaps I can even use him in my business. So you will kindly tell the boys to go nice and gentle, as Magic Eye Fine may be a very valuable man if he has the sense to listen to sound reason."

**W**HILST THE Boss is stopping in his own mansion on Hibiscus Island which same is sunk somewhere in Biscayne Bay, me and the boys is likewise taking advantage of the winter climate and also a suite in the Hotel Golden Fronds. It is a nice little joint and the rent is a steal, being only fifty slices of moola per day. With me is Bullet-Proof McMortuary and Super-Slug Schwartz who have been brung up in Brooklyn and can speak the language very well, indeed.

"Now, gentlemen," I say, when we are comfy in our suite, "as you may have heard, the Boss is very annoyed at the dire actions of this lad Magic Eye Fine and would like to hold converse with him as soon as you can bring him in."

Bullet-Proof takes his shootola out of his holdster and remarks, "Duh mug is practically right here now and I can do it wit only one shot. Howsoever—"

"You fail to comprehend the finer feelings of the Boss," I admonish. "He desires that the business of transportation be of the highest quality and does not get the interest of the cops."

"Yuh mean they have cops way down here, too?" ask Bullet-Proof.

"I understand they have same," I says; also they have a law that if you have a criminal record you must drop into police headquarters and give them a sample of your real name in pen and ink and in addition tell them where you are staying and how long you are staying and to wit why. This why is what discourages the boys from even calling at headquarters for a friendly handshake, because the boys feel that they are down in Miami and Miami Beach on a vacation from the snow of the north, and why they are down here is a matter that is the purest of personal."

"I do not how what is the address of the cop station," says Bullet-Proof, "and besides which I ain't got no criminals records to sign for because them six mugs I croaked just happened to pass in front of my gat while I was doin' a little polite practicin'."

The boys fill up some glasses with some special Florida wet-wash and toss it down their gullets and forget all about such uncouth items as cops and police stations. "Well, gentlemen," I say, "about this Magic Eye Fine person—I believe the Boss will pay a bonus if you bring him in not later than tomorrow. He should be all complete and no parts missing, as you know the Boss has a very artistic viewpoint and does not care to have any ears or arms out of place."

"Where does duh mug flop?" asks Bullet-Proof. "I will hire me a taxi and go forth and get him at once in a very refined manner."

"We will go forth immediately," says Super-Slug Schwartz, "and make the Boss very happy; if this Magic Eye character is not now floating in the ocean we will show him to you tonight."

I wish the boys bon trip and decide to pile into

the bed for at least a day because I have been very worried about the Boss's disposition on account of the manner in which his protégé Socker Sosin has been treated by Felony Jones's bindlewillie Galloping McBumm.

**A**BOUT 3 A.M. in the early morning I hear a slight riot outside the door and before anybody busts it down I yank it open and I see Bullet-Proof and Super-Slug with a very large bag between them.

"Mister Magic Eye Fine is callin'," says Bullet-Proof.

"Where is Mr. Fine at the present moment?" I ask.

"In duh bag," says Bullet-Proof. "He did not want anyone to lamp him so he is travelin' incognuts."

"That is no way for him to travel," I says. "You will please open the bag and let us see what Mr. Fine has to say, because maybe he thinks he is misunderstood."

The boys dump Magic Eye on the floor and he is quite upset about the means of transportation, claiming he prefers airplanes with a pretty steward serving him hot tea and sweet knickknacks.

"This," remarks Eagle Eye, "is a very great outrage and I will notify the police at once. You will please show me the telephone."

"Now, now," I sooth, "the telephone service in this trap is very poor and it will only annoy you if you try to call the police. Besides," I add, "the cops do not care to be bothered with small items."

Just then a B-29 or the like flies in the door and when the smoke drifts away I see what looks like Miss Freckle Face of 1948. "You—you louse!" she remarks, and prances over to Magic Eye Pine and cuffs him on the schnozz. "That for *you*, Sugar Pop! You tell me you will stay home and wait for Mommer and I see you now with a fine flock of jail-bait."

Bullet-Proof McMortuary raises one of his dark-and-heavy eyebrows and looks over his hundred-buck sport coat and then gives a glance at his new alligator shoes the price of same being forty-five slugs in real green cabbage, no checks.

"Female," says Bullet-Proof, "we do not care to dump dolls in the ocean, but, you are giving out with remarks on gents that do not care for same."

Miss Freckle Face turns to Bullet-Proof, and whinnies, "How was the warden when you left the

pen or did you take a walk while the guards was shootin' craps?"

From then on no more first class courtesy is shown to Miss Freckle Face by the boys. Bullet-Proof and Super-Slug are very positive that a very great insult to their characters and fine reputations has been given them by the dame, so they yam a gag into her mouth and tie her hands and feet. Before this can be accomplished she lets forth with a yelp and a scream that has some of the neighbors ask the clerk what type of murder is being performed in Suite 7-11. The clerk phones and I say, like this, "I have just informed Prof. Schwartz and Dr. McMortuary that they must not disturb the other guess by having the radio up so high, and they will have to go without it account both are very deaf in the ears."

We then put Magic Eye and his Mommer in the back room and I notice why they call him Magic Eye because the right peeper stares at you with a very funny look and out of it seems to come a stream of light. I also learn that Felony Jones pays him some real moola for putting the hex on the Boss's Socker Sosin, which is no doubt why he loses as I do not think the punches the Socker took would kill more than two bulls and a regiment of elephants.

After they have bedded down Fine and his Mommer what with one tied to one end of the bed and the other glued to the other I call up the Boss on Hibiscus Island and tell him the very nice news.

"I am very gratified highly," says the Boss, "although I am in the dead midst of a poker game and have dropped twenty grand to a couple of real estate gents but," goes on the Boss, "I have their home address and Bullet-Proof and Super-Slug can call on them later and get it back."

I turn to the boys and say, "The Boss will be right over and he is gratified, but very highly, and he may overlook some of those collections you made in Brooklyn where you forgot what you learned about arithmetic." The boys are very outraged at such a mere suggestion of them holding out and say they do not care to hear any more about such matters in the future.

**T**HE BOSS pops in a hour later and he is in a very merry mood and remarks that Magic Eye Fine will be a great addition to his chosen profession. I lead him into the back room and when he notes Magic Eye and Miss Freckle Face tied to

the bed he clucks his molars and says, "I do not desire to have this poor little beauty treated in such a manner and," he says, "you will please unfix her at once and give her this set of two fifty-dollar bills because I know she has been very uncomfortable."

Well, the easy dough makes Miss Freckle Face forget all about who she was going to kill first and she thinks the Boss is a very nice gent and I am glad because she reminds me of my first two wives who was cats from hell and may they both return there. When we untie Magic Eye he says he would like to see the police, two lawyers and above all Mr. Felony Jones.

"You will please do not mention any rats by the name of Jones," says the Boss, "because you are now in good company and are about to make real money instead of the corn flakes that Felony Jones pays you."

Magic Eye does not care to listen to the Boss but Miss Freckle Face waves the two fifties in front of his puss and states that he should have some brains as he is a big boy now and should act like the same. This kind of makes him blush and so he states that he will listen to reason if there is any heavy cash that goes with the reason.

"Look," says the Boss. "I am a patron of the arts and am very much interested in two race nags which will go at Hialeah track in a few days and I have a fine boxfighter named Socker Sosin who you ruined at the Orange Bowl the other evening when you tossed your eye at him. Now I will pay you in green cash the sum of \$500 per weekly if you will work for me and let your eye roam in the direction I so state."

"What do I do if Felony Jones shoots me?" demands Magic Eye. I am about to state that under such rude circumstance he should lay down and become a treat for the undertaker but just then Miss Freckle Face says, "I am the sole and only manager of Magic Eye Fine, and although I can see that you are a gent that is just like Santa Claus I must inform you that he will do nothing unless I give him the go-go."

"Well, now," says the Boss, "I am indeed very glad to note that Magic Eye has a smart girl as his manager and, I will show you how much I appreciate brains, because I do not have too much in my organization. Howsoever, I was walking down Lincoln Road on Miami Beach yesterday and I see a very swell mink coat that is just about—"

"Okay," says Miss Freckle Face. "I can see you

are a gent who can appreciate the value of a girl who is just tryin' to get along."

Well, we shake hands all around and the Boss suggests that Bullet-Proof act like a social secretary to Magic Eye and Miss Freckle Face, who announces that her real name is Miss Eloisa Antoinette Borgia from 10th Avenue New York. "I do not desire that Felony Jones use any uncouth and rough treatment on my new protégés," says the Boss. "I could get a police escort," says the Boss, "but they are very busy and I do not care to bother them."

I AM sitting in a food trap on Flagler Street the next afternoon having a little breakfast at 3 P.M. when I get the idea that there is something foreign up my nose. The smell becomes worse and I look up and there is Felony Jones and he is very upset about something and he sits down beside me and remarks, "Look, crook, what makes you and that Boss of yours think you got brains, hey?"

"I have come in here," I say, "to eat in peace and quietness and I do not care to discuss matters with characters of your ilk and general deportment. And what is more," I say, "if all the clinks you have been in was colleges you would have more degrees than ten college professors."

Felony fingers the sugar bowl a minute and can't make up his mind whether to deliver it to my head or let it land on my beak. Finally he puts it down and remarks, "Bum, I know you have kidnapped Magic Eye Fine and I will take steps to see that you get in poor health sudden-like. And," he says, "you can tell that lousy boss of yours that he will be smart to keep his insurance paid up. I know bid you good afternoon."

That evening I am gallavating in one of the Miami Beach nightclubs with a blonde sweetie who claims she quit Hollywood account of Lana Turner being jealous of her when in comes the Boss and honors me by sitting at my table.

"Ah," says the Boss, "and who is this queen of the night, may I ask?"

"Duh name's Josie Maloney," says my sweetie, "an' I think your cute."

We have a little chitchat for awhile and then I tell the Boss that Mr. Felony Jones has stated that his health will not be improved in the very near future.

"My, my," says the Boss, "you will please have Bullet-Proof ask the price of concrete and also find

out how deep is Biscayne Bay because, I do not desire to have my health get poorly.” Then he turns to my sweetie and remarks, “Well, come along now, my pet, and let us see if the lights are brighter in other joints.”

Miss Maloney leaps from the table and takes the Boss’s arm and waves me a goodbye from the door and that is what I like about the Boss because he always has a eye for beauty and don’t care who she is with. I order a Beach cocktail—two parts Miami River and one part Georgia corn—and then depart hence into the starry night.

I am walking down Collins Avenue admiring the palms trees and the drunks when a black car passes and a flock of shots spit flame in my direction. None of the bullets come near me, proving that the boys have been out of practice, and so I watch the car race away and don’t even bother with the license. A moment later a cop squad car pops up and one of the lads says. “What is going on here, fella?”

I say, like this, “I do not know what you are conversing about but if you are alluding to something that sounded like the Battle of the Bulge, why a big car needs its engine cleaned out because it backfires all over the street.”

“Oh,” says the cop, “I see. Funny how you can’t tell the difference between real shots and backfiring, ain’t it?” I agree that it is and I walk down the street wondering if Felony Jones has been out riding for his health or have the Kremlin Kids taken over Miami Beach.

EVERYTHING is very quiet for the next week and then the Boss gets his two bangtails hooked to do some running at Hialeah Park track. I have never seen these nags and for all I know they are a couple of brewery specials and will not move unless hooked to a truck. The Boss does not like their original names which is *FBI Special* and *Sing Sing Boy* and so he changes them to *Running Racket* and *Habeas Corpus*.

He has one nag entered in the third and the other in the seventh and the odds on both are 10-to-1 showing that the wise money boys don’t figure either tramp has a chance to come in six furlongs behind last. The Boss has a swanky private box in the clubhouse section and his name is out front in gold letters and he wipes it off with his hanky just before he sits down. Magic Eye Fine is there and so is Eloisa Antoinette Borgia and I note that Magic

Eye has a black patch covering his boxing orb. He tells the Boss that he must do that to prevent wear and tear on the pupil which is very high strung and delicate, indeed.

“Now,” says the Boss to Magic Eye Fine, “if you will put the whammy on them other dogs and see that my purebreds win I will pay you a very large sum of money.”

“The Eye is in one swell condition,” says Magic Eye, “and your purebreds can’t lose.”

Just then a very sinister character struts up in front of the box and I think he is going to wreck the health of the Boss but he just leans over the rail and hands him a envelope. The Boss reads it very carefully and smiles all over the track and I am greatly relieved that the Boss is so happy.

“Well!” he says, “I see by this communique that Felony Jones has learned how to write and can spell a few words with only two mistakes in each word and,” says the Boss, “he wants to know if I will make him a side bet of five grand that his ape Galloping McBumm can knock out Socker Sosin in a return bout. He says he can get the bout booked in the Biscayne Arena in the next two weeks and that makes me very happy indeed.” Then he turns to Magic Eye Fine, and says, “Good friend, this time you will be on my side and my champ can’t lose.”

“Yeah,” says Magic Eye, and that is all.

WELL, I will not bore you with what happens to the Boss’s two entries with long details because I am not no radio sports announcer who bust their lungs over nothing whatsoever. When the third race starts, *Running Racket* is fourth from the rail and when the starting gate goes up the jockey near falls off the nag and the nag acts like he is very ill and would like a doctor at once. The Boss looks at Magic Eye and says, “What is this? What is this?”

Magic Eye says, “Be calm and not perturbed. The Eye will now begin to commence.”

Soon *Running Racket* gets back to normal and the eight bangtails start swooping around the track but the dust is so great I can’t tell whether nags or midget autos are racing. At the half the dust clears and I am very dumfounded to see that *Running Racket* is in the lead by two lengths. I look at Magic Eye and he is doing his stuff in full bloom and the Boss is so happy that he near falls out of the box. This is most disgusting to me because I have placed a little secret bet on the favorite,

*Sucker Bait*, but I do not care to have the Boss know anything about it.

At the end of the race *Running Racket* won by six lengths and all the wise money boys go out and buy themselves some pure arsenic.

When the seventh race comes up *Habeas Corpus* is second from the rail and he looks to me like he has been out for six nights with a couple of fast fillies and I don't think he can come in before the night begins to fall. I frankly think that the Magic Eye Fine stuff is a lot of very pure crap and I sneak down a bet on the favorite, *Alms House*, because even the dopes who write the dope sheets all pick him to breeze in like a comet.

Well, I do not know whether all the other ten nags in the race are drugged, or just dead, but from the way *Habeas Corpus* speeds home I get the notion that maybe there is something to the goo of Magic Eye Fine.

"Great work!" says the Boss, putting his arms around the shoulders of Magic Eye. "You are undoubtedly a very great genius."

"Yeah," agrees Magic Eye and lets it go at that.

Back in our hotel suite I note that Bullet-Proof McMortuary and Super-Slug Schwartz are looking like their rich grandpops died and left all the money to Joe Stalin. I enquire with all my usual politeness if they have had a profitable day at the track and they remark that it is indeed too bad that bums like Magic Eye Fine do not take a high dive in the dead center of the Gulf Stream, which is very wet all over and likewise deep.

"Duh guy must have somethin'," says Bullet-Proof. "Them two dogs of the Boss's are just good to make soap out of when boiled down proper. How come they win, huh?"

I WILL now come to the night of the McBumm-Sosin fight at the Biscayne Arena because I would like to get this over with as much as you and because it just goes to show that there are more crappy endings in real life than happy.

Socker Sosin is in fine shape for the condition he is in and anyone who can train in Miami in the winter season is very nuts account of there are so many nicer things you can do, some of them blonde and some of them brunette and a very nice ocean to bathe in. Galloping McBumm enters the ring first and Felony Jones and his hoods are in the corner and they all look too happy to suit me.

The Boss is sitting in a ringside seat near the

Socker's corner and Bullet-Proof and Super-Slug are acting as seconds, which is very funny because the boys can't tell a foul blow from a machine-gun. I look around and do not see Magic Eye Fine and I say to the Boss, like this, "Boss, where is Magic Eye this night of all nights when we need him very greatly?"

"I am beginning to wonder if Magic Eye overslept so his great Eye will be rested," says the Boss, "but I am very certain he will be here right away any minute."

But by the time the brawl starts there is no Magic Eye and the Boss is very upset and annoyed at his absence and I wonder what has become of him. Just before the bell for the first round Eloisa Antoinette Borgia pops beside the Boss and says, "Have you not see Magic Eye?"

"No," says the Boss, "and why don't you know where he may be?"

"He is not at home," says Eloisa, "and I am very worried that he is alone and maybe sick some place where I can't help him."

"This," says the Boss, "is a very good time to think of such matters and if he is not here very right away he will not be any other place for the rest of his life."

The bell.

Sosin leaves his corner with a mean snare on his mug and belts McBumm with a left and right to the head and I think that maybe Sosin has had a few drinks of Georgia Corn because he has never shown so much action before. The Boss does not even look at the fight because he is worried about Magic Eye and also about the side bet of five grand he has with Felony Jones and maybe other matters.

I hear a thump on the floor and I am very amazed to see that it is McBumm on the canvas and not Sosin and Felony Jones hollers across the ring.

"Some bum musta waxed the canvas—its all slippery!"

McBumm takes a count of nine which is pretty long for a guy who has just slipped and then Sosin belts him again with a right to the kisser and again he goes down. I yell over to Felony Jones, "Wax is great stuff, hey?"

I think the bell saves McBumm from a beautiful kayo and for a moment the Boss forgets about Magic Eye Fine and thinks Sosin can win without any whammy. The second round is worth anybody's dough and I will admit that I am very surprised at so much action on the part of both

hambos because if they are real fisticuffers I am Joe Louis in his prime.

The third round is very sad and just as McBumm has Sosin on the floor in comes Magic Eye Fine and he is very upset and looks it. The Boss grabs him by the shoulders and yells. "Quick, the Eye, the Eye!"

I LOOK up into the ring and I see the hand of the ref going up and down over the dozing form of Socker Sosin and I get the notion that all the Magic Eyes in the world ain't going to bring back our brat for more entertainment from Brother McBumm.

Then the Boss notes that Magic Eye ain't even took his black cover off his eye and begins to roar all around the place like the Russians have landed and have took Times Squarehead. "What is this! What is this?" howls the Boss. "You have not even removed the cover and how do you expect to work the Eye with the cover over it!"

Magic Eye opens his mouth to say something but before he can say a sound the Boss rips the cover from the eye and we all stand in great amazement and alarm.

*That eye ain't got no eye but is a eyeless socket!*

"Well!" says the Boss. "Now what can this be? I do not understand!"

Magic Eye puts his hand over his eye and says, like this, "I would like to make a statement," he says, "I have been held up and robbed and I am very unhappy that I have been unable to serve you. But," says Magic Eye, "I will get even with the lowdown crooks who have done this outrage to me."

"What are you trying to tell me?" demands the Boss.

"I am sitting alone in the hotel and waiting for some time to come to the arena when someone unlocks the door and hits me on the head with a jack. When I feel better I note that my Eye has been took and I know I cannot help Socker Sosin without it. So—"

"You mean you did all that whammy stuff with a glass eye?" whoops the Boss.

"Yeah," says Magic Eye Fine. "What is wrong with that?"

THE END